

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Applicants submit below a complete listing of the current claims, including marked-up claims with insertions indicated by underlining and deletions indicated by strikeouts and/or double bracketing. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An integrated circuit comprising one or several metallization levels, metal conductive strips and a metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~ being formed on a last metallization level, wherein the metal contact pad has pads have a first length, a first width, and a first thickness, the first thickness being the distance from a bottom of the metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~ to a top of the metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~, wherein the first length and the first width are greater than the first thickness, the last level being covered with a passivation layer in which is ~~[[are]]~~ formed an opening ~~openings~~ above the contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~, wherein the metal conductive strips have a second thickness along a same direction as the first thickness, wherein the first thickness of the metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~, at least for a first portion ~~portions~~ of the metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~ that is ~~[[are]]~~ not covered by the passivation layer, is smaller than the second thickness of said conductive strips prior to application of an external contact to the metal contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~, wherein the top of metal contact pad has a substantially flat surface extending substantially throughout the entire opening.

2. (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein at least one conductive strip forms a coil.

3. (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein several of said conductive strips form a supply network.

4. (Original) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the last metallization level is formed on an insulating layer, each contact pad being formed of a conductive layer covering an insulating portion laid on the insulating layer.

5. (Currently Amended) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the contact pads are pad is made of aluminum.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for forming the last metallization level of the integrated circuit of claim 1, comprising:

depositing a metal layer on a substrate;

etching the metal layer to form a metal portion ~~portions~~ and said conductive strips;

covering the substrate, the conductive strips, and the metal portion ~~portions~~ with a passivation layer;

forming an opening ~~openings~~ in the passivation layer above the metal portion ~~portions~~;
and

partially etching the metal portion ~~portions~~ to decrease ~~their~~ the thickness of the metal portion to obtain said contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for forming the last metallization level of the integrated circuit of claim 1, comprising:

depositing a metal layer on a substrate;

etching the metal layer to form a metal portion ~~portions~~ and said conductive strips;

covering the conductive strips with a protection layer;

partially etching the metal portion ~~portions~~ to decrease ~~their~~ the thickness of the metal portion to obtain said contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~;

removing, if necessary, the protection layer;

covering the substrate, the conductive strips, and the contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~ with a passivation layer; and

forming an opening ~~openings~~ in the passivation layer above the contact pad ~~[[pads]]~~.

8. (Previously presented) The integrated circuit of claim 1, wherein the second thickness is at least about twice as large as the first thickness.